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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICEApplicants: **Christoph Seidel, et al.**Serial No.: **09/896,032**Filed: **June 29, 2001**For: **METHOD FOR DETERMINING EARLY HCV SEROCONVERSION**Group Art Unit: **1648**Examiner: **D.C. Wortman**

September 17, 2002

Hon. Commissioner of Patents
and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

**AMENDMENT
UNDER 37 CFR §1.111**

This amendment is submitted in response to the office action dated March 20, 2002. A 3 month extension of time is required, and a request therefor, with fee, accompanies this amendment.

Please amend this application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATIONPlease add the attached page.**IN THE CLAIMS**

Amend claim 27 and add claims 38 and 39 as follows:

Claim 27: A method for recognition of seroconversion, comprising: incubating a sample taken from a subject, under reducing conditions which prevent formation of covalent, cross linked molecular aggregates, with at least one polypeptide consisting of an amino acid sequence found in a hepatitis C virus protein NS3 region which is immunologically reactive with said hepatitis C virus specific antibody, and determining binding of said antibody to said polypeptide to recognize

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